

Durham Mennonite Church

July 23, 2023



Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Prayer

Call to Worship - Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

then it was said among the nations,

‘The Lord has done great things for them.’

**The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.**

**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.**

May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

**Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.**

Hymn - VT #122, *Sing to the God of Harvest*

**1 Sing to the God of harvest
a song of love and praise;
with joyful hearts and voices
your alleluias raise;
by God's command the seasons
in fruitful order move;
so thank the God of harvest
with hymns of heartfelt love.**

**2 God gives the rain and sunshine,
the deserts bloom and spring,
all creatures leap in gladness,
the children laugh and sing.
God fills them with abundance,
all living things increase,
the year is crowned with kindness,
with plenty and with peace.**

**3 Bring to the holy table
gifts God in goodness gave,
the wheat of gospel planting,
the world Christ died to save.
And bring the cup of blessing,
the fruit of field and vine,
and thank the God of harvest
who calls us now to dine.**

Hymn - VT #152, *God Whose Purpose*

**1 God, whose purpose is to kindle,
now ignite us with your fire.
While the earth awaits your burning,
with your passion us inspire.
Overcome our sinful calmness,
stir us with your saving name.
Baptize with your fiery Spirit,
crown our lives with tongues of flame.**

**2 God, who still a sword delivers
rather than a placid peace,
with your sharpened word disturb us,
from complacency release!
Save us now from satisfaction,
when we privately are free,
yet are undisturbed in spirit
by our neighbor's misery.**

**3 God, who in your holy gospel
wills that all should truly live,
make us sense our share of failure,
our tranquility forgive.
Teach us courage as we struggle
in all liberating strife.
Lift the smallness of our vision
by your own abundant life.**

Hymn - VT #123, Come Ye Thankful People

**1 Come, ye thankful people come!
Raise the song of harvest home.
All is safely gathered in
ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker, doth provide
for our need to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple come.
Raise the song of harvest home.**

**2 All the world is God's own field,
fruit unto God's praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown,
unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear.
God of harvest, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.**

**3 For our God again shall come,
and shall take the harvest home,
from the field shall in that day
all offenses cast away,
giving angels charge at last
in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store
in God's garner evermore.**

**4 Then, O church triumphant, come.
Raise the song of harvest home.
All are safely gathered in,
free from sorrow, free from sin;
there forever purified
in God's presence to abide.
Come, ten thousand angels, come!
Raise the song of harvest home.**

Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God,
our sins are too heavy to carry,
too real to hide, and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear
and what has become for us
a consuming fire of judgment.
Set us free from a past we cannot change;
open to us a future
in which we shall be changed;
and grant us grace to grow
more and more in your likeness and image;
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.
Amen.**

Assurance of Grace (from Isaiah 44:2-4)

Thus says the Lord who made you,
who formed you in the womb
and will help you:

Do not fear, O Jacob my servant,
my chosen.

For I will pour water on your thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour my spirit upon you,
and my blessing on your offspring.

You shall spring up like a green tamarisk,
like willows by flowing streams.

Hymn - VT#670

In the Bulb there is a Flower

**1 In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**2 There's a song in ev'ry silence,
seeking word and melody.
There's a dawn in ev'ry darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;**

**what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**3 In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

Scripture - Romans 8:12-25 (NRSV)

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with

Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we

ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Scripture - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the

wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
Then the righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone
with ears listen!

Sermon – Spencer Bradford

Congregational Response

Sharing praises and prayer concerns

Prayers of the Church

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn - Bringing in the Sheaves

**1 Sowing in the morning,
sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide
and the dewy eve;
Waiting for the harvest,
and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

Refrain:

**Bringing in the sheaves,
bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves;
Bringing in the sheaves,
Bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

**2 Sowing in the sunshine,
sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds
nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest,
and the labor ended,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

Refrain:

**Bringing in the sheaves,
bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves;
Bringing in the sheaves,
Bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

**3 Going forth with weeping,
sowing for the Master,
Though the loss sustained
our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping over,
He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

Refrain:

**Bringing in the sheaves,
bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves;
Bringing in the sheaves,
Bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing,
bringing in the sheaves.**

Benediction (from Isaiah 44:6-8)

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

Who is like me? Let them proclaim it, let them declare and set it forth before me.

Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be.

Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses!